

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the rejection of Claims 1-7, 11, and 13 Under 35 USC §102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,775,862 (Cullen) is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the Cullen patent fails to disclose or suggest a fastening structure for a connector in which the connector is fastened by free sections of resilient sheets engaging the threaded section of the connector. Instead of fastening the connector, the “resilient tongues” 20 of Cullen apply a bias to half nuts 45 which opposes insertion of the screw 72. Attachment of the screw of Cullen occurs upon turning of the screw so as to cause nut 45 to flatten against the substrate 10. At this point, the tongues 20 do not fasten the screw to the connector.

The purpose of the resilient tongues 20 of Cullen is to enable the screw to initially be pushed straight into the nut and held in preparation for turning. As explained in col. 3, lines 16-22 of Cullen, *“this action takes place against the resilient bias applied to the half nuts 45 by virtue of the resilient tongues 20. In this way, it is possible to push the screw 72 fully home so that the head thereof bears against the outer surface of panel 70, without rotating the screw.”* Once the screw has been fully inserted, it can be tightened with the result that the half-nut 45 and tongues 20 are flattened against the panel or substrate, the screw at this time being held in conventional fashion by half nut 45.

In effect, tongues 20 of Cullen serve as a spring washer to facilitate tightening of the nut 45 and screw 72. As a result, tongues 20 do not serve the same purpose as the claimed free sections, and also differ structurally from the claimed free ends, for at least the following reasons:

- a. Claim 1 specifically recites that the free ends **engage** the threaded section upon pressing by a **fixture**. The free ends of tongues 20 of Cullen do not appear to engage the threads of screw 72, which is instead threaded into half nut 45 (note the space 25b shown in Fig. 13).
- b. Even if some engagement occurs, the engagement is incidental and does not **fasten** the screw of Cullen to the substrate, as recited in claim 1. Instead,

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fastening is carried out by engagement between the screw and half nut 45, while tongues 20 actually bias nut 45 in a direction opposite the direction of insertion.

- c. Claim 1 specifically recites that fastening occurs **without** the need for a **fastening nut**. Element 45 of Cullen is in fact a **fastening nut**.
- d. The **screw** of Cullen is not a **connector**, as recited in claim 1.

Because of these differences, it is respectfully submitted that tongues 20 of Cullen do not correspond to the resilient sheets and/or free ends recited in claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC §102(b) is accordingly respectfully requested.

Having thus overcome each of the sole rejection made in the Official Action, expedited passage of the application to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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